

ARTICLE APPROVED
ON PAGE 1-4WASHINGTON TIMES
3 December 1986

Carlucci named to NSC post

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Reagan said yesterday he supports Attorney General Edwin Meese's decision to seek an independent counsel to probe allegations of criminality in the secret diversion of Iranian arms funds to Nicaragua's anti-Marxist rebels.

It was the fourth time in three weeks that Mr. Reagan has addressed the Iranian arms scandal on national television.

Minutes after Mr. Reagan spoke, Mr. Meese revealed plans to seek a court-appointed counsel under the 1978 Ethics in Government Act, a post-Watergate law designed to remove criminal investigations of administration officials from Justice Department jurisdiction.

In his midday television address, the president also announced the appointment of former Deputy Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci as his national security adviser and threw his full support behind proposals for a joint congressional committee to consolidate at least nine separate investigations now under way on Capitol Hill.

"If the investigative processes now set in motion are given an opportunity to work, all the facts concerning Iran and the transfer of funds to assist the anti-Sandinista forces will shortly be made public," Mr. Reagan said in a four-minute speech from his White House desk.

"Then the American people will be the final arbiters of this controversy," he said. "You will have all the facts and will be able to judge for yourselves."

The president said Mr. Meese had informed him that the Justice Department's preliminary probe had turned up reasonable grounds to

warrant investigation by an independent counsel.

"If illegal acts were undertaken, those who did so will be brought to justice," Mr. Reagan said. "If actions in implementing my policy were undertaken without my authorization, knowledge or concurrence, this will be exposed and appropriate corrective steps implemented."

The president, rocked by disclosures that up to \$30 million in proceeds from arms sales to Iran were secretly diverted to the Nicaraguan resistance, had been under pressure from lawmakers of both parties to authorize a special counsel.

His appointment of Mr. Carlucci, 56, to take over the embattled National Security Council followed by one day a presidential order that the NSC halt all sensitive foreign policy missions.

Mr. Carlucci, who served in senior posts in both Democratic and Republican administrations, is expected to restructure the NSC staff of about 46 military, CIA, State Department and other officials.

According to informed sources, he also is likely to clean the house of some of the career Navy officers brought aboard the NSC by Vice Adm. John Poindexter, who resigned as national security adviser last week when it was disclosed he was aware of the rebel funding scheme.

The Carlucci appointment was supported strongly by Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of State George P. Shultz and CIA Director William J. Casey.

Others who were considered for the key national security post were former U.N. Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick; Ambassador to NATO David Abshire; William Hyland, a former aide to one-time Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; and Navy Secretary John Lehman.

Mr. Carlucci, who will become Mr. Reagan's fifth national security adviser in six years, was deputy director of the CIA in the Carter administration and deputy secretary of defense during the first two years of the Reagan administration.

He is expected to be sworn in as soon as he receives security

clearance to deal with some of the nation's most important secrets.

Mr. Reagan also said the Special Review Board, which he appointed last week to conduct still another NSC investigation, promised him "a tough, no-nonsense investigation."

In return, the president said he promised the review board "the full cooperation of the White House staff and all agencies of the executive branch."

The president also said he will cooperate with congressional inquiries. He said he already had taken the unprecedented step of permitting two former NSC advisers to testify before a committee of Congress.

Former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane testified for

nearly seven hours before the Senate Intelligence Committee Monday and Adm. Poindexter appeared briefly yesterday.

Mr. McFarlane orchestrated U.S.-arranged arms shipments to Iran

that began in mid-1985. He also knew of the rebel funding operation, which occurred after December 1985 when he resigned from the administration.

Mr. Meese has said that Lt. Col. Oliver North, a top Poindexter aide who was fired by the president last week, was the only U.S. official with precise knowledge that funds had been diverted to Nicaragua's Contra rebels. Col. North reportedly invoked the Fifth Amendment 40 times Monday in declining to answer questions by the intelligence panel.

In other developments related to the Iranian-arms, rebel-funding controversy:

- The New York Times, quoting unnamed administration officials, yesterday reported that some of the money from arms sales to Iran may have been diverted to anti-communist rebels in Angola and Afghanistan.

- The Los Angeles Times reported that Mr. Casey, contrary to an account he initially gave House and Senate intelligence committees, ordered the agency to provide "logistic support" for the U.S.-Israeli shipment of arms to Iran in November 1985.

Mr. Casey told the intelligence committees Nov. 21 that John N. McMahon, then the agency's deputy director for operations, approved the arms shipment without his knowledge. But the Los Angeles Times, quoting unidentified sources, reported Mr. Casey has since admitted giving his approval to the operation.

- The White House denied having any knowledge of published reports that billionaire H. Ross Perot provided ransom money for unsuccessful attempts by Col. North to obtain release of American hostages in Lebanon.

Mr. Perot confirmed the reports early yesterday on ABC's "Nightline."